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ABSTRACT

This brief overview of the growing alternative school movement emphasizes those features of alternative schools that are of most interest to school administrators. There is some discussion of different forms of alternative schools that have been tried, but attention is mainly focused on the general characteristics common to most alternative schools and on how alternative schools differ from conventional schools. Short sections are devoted to discussions of finance, pupil selection, instructional objectives, curriculum programs, staffing, and pupil evaluation. Administrative needs, school governance patterns, and school facilities appropriate for alternative schools are discussed, and the relationship of alternative schools to nearby conventional schools is considered. Brief descriptions of the alternative school programs underway in six U. S. cities and a bibliography of recent publications dealing with the topic are included. (JG)

Research
Ideas
Practice

CURRICULUM Report

FROM THE CURRICULUM SERVICE CENTER / NASSP

Vol. 2, No. 3 March 1973

MORE OPTIONS

Alternatives to Conventional School

In What Ways Different?

The rapid increase in the number and variety of alternative schools in the last two years and the continuing expansion that seems certain to take place in the next five years both suggest that this is a movement all principals need to examine closely. This is the case whether you are thinking about opening your own alternative school or are wondering what you and your associates can learn from the experiences of alternative schools to improve your own school or are simply trying to keep abreast of major developments affecting American secondary education.

What are alternative schools? How can you recognize one when you see it? There is so much diversity in the movement that a single definition is risky, but the features which distinguish most of these schools from conventional or regular ones do provide a definition of sorts. (We are not using "conventional" and "regular" in a pejorative sense; they seem only to be convenient terms to contrast "alternative" with.)

- They are significantly different from their conventional counterparts in curriculum and in instructional practices.
- They strive for greater involvement of staff and students in decision-making than is the case in most regular schools.
- They are more flexible and, therefore, more responsive to evolution and planned change.
- They tend to make more extensive use of community resources and facilities.
- They usually have a commitment to be more responsive to some community need or needs than conventional schools have been.
- They are most often comparatively small schools, with student bodies ranging from 30 to 400.

What Are the Options?

Although these half dozen characteristics mark a majority of alternative schools, these schools do differ strikingly in their goals and in the structures they have developed to achieve these goals. Here are some of the more common types.

- Open Schools. Learning activities in these schools are more individualized and are organized around learning centers within a classroom or within the school building. The St. Paul Open School and the Brown Open School in Louisville, Ky., are two instances. Each enrolls about 400 elementary and secondary school students.

- Magnet Schools and Learning Centers. Some alternative schools are oriented toward a specific interest area; e.g., the visual and performing arts, the musical arts, the sciences, environmental studies. Sometimes these schools are designed for particularly gifted young people. The Berkeley High School of the Arts is a foremost example of this type of school.

- Schools-without-Walls. One of the first modern alternative public schools was the Park-Program in Philadelphia which, incidentally, is still going strong. It was a leader in making extensive and systematic use of community facilities for educational purposes, holding classes in office building, museums, and public libraries. Parkway has no school building in the conventional sense.

- Drop-out, Drop-in Schools. These are drop-in centers for youngsters who have dropped out of regular high schools and for potential dropouts. Sometimes the educational program is combined with a community-living center. Number Nine in New Haven, Conn., was one of the first efforts to provide this kind of educational opportunity.

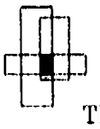
- Alternatives for Disruptive Students. Some schools are trying to stabilize their conventional schools by creating alternative schools with programs designed to give school-rejects--disruptive students--enhanced self-images and other kinds of help. Philadelphia has just opened some 30 alternative schools designed explicitly to salvage the disruptive student.

- Free Schools. These schools tend to be more radical in ideology and looser in structure than other alternative forms, striving to help young people and adults learn to live together in an atmosphere of freedom. Pacific High School in Palo Alto, Calif., is a current example. Most free schools are non-public.

- Freedom Schools. Chiefly community-based and developed, these are schools operated by and for blacks and other ethnic minorities. They stress ethnic studies and basic learning skills. Harlem Prep in New York City was one of the first and is probably the best known of this type of alternative school. Most freedom schools are non-public.

- Career Schools. These newly developed alternatives are trying to find new ways for young people to gain greater knowledge of careers and to acquire more useful job skills. The Career Academy, operated by Research for Better Schools, is one of several such schools that have been funded by the U.S. Office of Education.

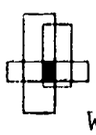
- Survival Schools. These are not really schools in any usual sense of the word. Rather, they are groups of adults who take young people into challenging natural environments to teach them how to get along together, how to brave the elements, how to discover who they really are. Outward Bound was one of the first such efforts, and it has spawned a host of followers.



Just Another Fad?

The rate at which the alternative schools movement is expanding makes it impossible to provide reliable up-to-date figures on numbers. However, best current estimates are that there now are more than 3,000 elementary and secondary schools that can be loosely classified as "alternatives," and one projection indicates that by 1976 there will be close to 20,000 such schools operating in this country.

While one can never be quite sure about such things, all signs suggest that we are not dealing here with just another educational fad. Society is moving toward alternatives of all sorts, and a "temporary society" faced with continuing change probably requires small, autonomous units that can respond quickly to pervasive change. Most alternative schools are "open systems" that can survive change and pressure by making minor or major corrections of course without undue strain. Finally, the idea of smaller and quite different schools as options is not new; it's an old practice that is now gaining new strength. So, our best guess is that alternative schools--perhaps under some other name--will be around for some time to come.



Thinking of Starting an Alternative?

What can we learn from alternative schools that can be of use to schools of the more usual kind? What gives alternative schools their strength? By raising and trying to answer some of the questions that must be dealt with by anyone planning an alternative school, we can gain some insights that may be of value to all schools and school administrators.

A How much money will we need? Just a bit more than you will have, as is always the case. But one thing alternative schools are trying to prove is that small alternative educational units can be more cost-efficient than many large ones. If you do not invest large sums in special facilities (such as gymnasia) or in special services (such as cafeteria service) then you can spend more on the instructional side of the operation. And small schools often can live comfortably and productively without some of the non-teaching personnel that large schools may need and are accustomed to.

Per pupil costs in most alternative schools are at about the same level as those in the large conventional schools in their districts, but they are getting smaller classes because a larger fraction of their available dollars are going into instruction. We used to think that small schools were expensive to operate, and in general this no doubt is true. But it does not seem to be true in the case of schools that are experimenting with new kinds of learning spaces and simpler staffing arrangements.

One lesson for existing schools is clear: Big schools are expensive to run because too many of them have become like big factories, and one way out is to open up some small alternatives. These smaller alternatives may not save you money, but neither will they cost you more!

B Which pupils are we trying to serve? As we have said, existing alternative schools are reaching very different sorts of students, and the methods they use to select their students are equally varied. Here are some of the admissions policies now being used.

- Anyone can apply, and the final selection is by lottery
- Anyone can apply, and selection is made after careful interviewing and screening
- Anyone can apply, and all the applicant needs to do is walk in

- Only certain types of students are desired, and they are invited to apply
- Only certain types are desired, and they are carefully identified and urged to attend
- Only certain types of students are desired, and such students are given the "choice" of attending the alternative school or being excluded entirely

Each of these admissions processes has its vocal defenders, who argue chiefly from ideological grounds. All that can be safely said is that an alternative school has a greater chance of succeeding if students see it as a desirable place to attend, and not as a dumping ground for those who have exhausted all other options. It is important, therefore, that planners of alternative schools make an early decision about the target population and the method by which students are to be selected for (or injected into) the school.

A lesson here for school administrators--including those in the best possible alternative schools and the most comprehensive of convention schools--is that no one school is the best place for all students. Experience shows that when an alternative school opens near one of our "best" schools, at least 15 percent of its students will apply for admission to the alternative. And when one opens near one of our "worst" schools, at least 75 percent of its student body probably will choose not to apply. Therefore, we conclude that all students--in city and suburb, town and country--need more choices, and one viable choice, of course, is the existing school!

What about relationships with the regular school? Here the choices are clear-cut:

(1) The alternative school is part of an existing school and housed in the same building or on the same campus. For example, the Cambridge (Mass.) Pilot School is in the same building as Rindge Technical School.

(2) The alternative school is an annex of the existing school, using a building nearby that school and drawing on some of the special services (attendance, health, guidance, etc.) of the big school. The School for Human Services in Philadelphia (a very exciting alternative, by the way) is a branch of the John Bartram High School.

(3) The alternative school is completely separate from the regular school. Probably most alternatives are of this type.

Which solution is best? None, really, since each has its special advantages and disadvantages.

i. The school-within-a-school is easier to establish and less expensive to operate, but serious problems of territoriality and rules develop in almost every case.

ii. The annex tries to have the best of both worlds, but it is never quite sure whether it is fish or fowl. It usually leans toward autonomy, but at times it draws support from and creates problems for the "mother" school.

iii. The completely autonomous school feels more its own master, but it is not able to draw on the elaborate support system of the school district and soon finds that zoning regulations and unhappy landlords make life unpleasant.

D What are the objectives of the alternative school? The answers to this question are crucial since they obviously influence program, determine the allocation of resources, and become the basis for program evaluation. Most goal statements developed by alternative schools include such aims as: (a) Increase basic learning skills, (b) Develop an improved self-image, (c) Reduce the level of interpersonal conflict, (d) Develop autonomy and independence, (e) Stimulate creativity, and (f) Increase knowledge in social science, humanities, mathematics, and science.

General aims of this sort certainly are familiar. The main difference between those of most conventional schools and a list such as the above is that alternative schools seem to give more explicit attention to what can be called personal-growth goals. As one alternative school director put it, "To the three R's we have added the three B's--Being, Becoming, and Belonging."

Such general goals make a good point to start from; however, they need to be translated into more specific objectives if they are to be useful guides to program development and evaluation. And schools of all types would do well to check their statements of purpose to see if they sufficiently reflect the humanistic concerns that are becoming increasingly important.

E What curricula can we develop to achieve these goals? One advantage of alternative schools is that they are a fertile ground for curricular experimentation, to the extent that generalizing about their programs is difficult. Some recurring patterns can be seen, nonetheless.

- Basic skills laboratories that focus on fundamental learning skills, often through some type of individualized instructional system; for instance, in many schools you can find a "Communications Laboratory," a "Mathematics Lab," and so on, where the specific skills are dealt with directly and explicitly.

- Short-term mini-courses, most often in the humanities, and usually planned cooperatively by students and teachers, dealing with such issues of relevance as war and peace, women's liberation, black poetry, and environmental pollution.

- Big Ideas courses, that consider such large questions as "How does our system really work?" and "What will life be like in the future?" Such courses require large blocks of time, teams of teachers, and much community involvement.

- Work and service experience, offering students significant learning opportunities in the real world. In fact, many alternative schools are making work and service the central thrust of their programs. For instance, the previously mentioned School for Human Service in Philadelphia requires students to spend the equivalent of half of each day working in some human-service institution.

- Skill exchanges, which are informal arrangements by which students teach each other such things as guitar playing, stained glass making, bicycle repairing, and poetry writing.

- Experiences and happenings, which can include such activities as constructing a geodesic dome, finding a new building, and lobbying for peace in Washington, often prove to be the highlights of the year for an alternative school.

- Informal seminars, frequently stimulated by a guest speaker or school visitor, which range over topics such as meditation techniques, marijuana legislation, tax protests, and radical politics.

The openness and looseness of most alternative school environments enable teachers to create a rich variety of learning experiences that transcend our customary notions of "curriculum." But, perhaps not surprisingly, even alternative schools are learning that sciences such as physics and chemistry, advanced mathematics, and foreign languages are best learned in somewhat structured courses. There is much in this curricular experimentation that conventional schools can adopt or adapt, and some of this "transfer of training" is going on, for all schools are coming to see that the old curriculum packages of the 60's aren't attracting many customers these days.

What facilities will we need? New ground is being broken in this regard, too. While many alternative schools are housed in existing schools or in old, abandoned elementary buildings, several are stretching the idea of "school building" to include some very unconventional and, many times, very exciting spaces for learning. Here are some of the more interesting varieties:

- Schools-without-walls. As mentioned above, the Parkway Program was one of the first alternative schools to see the entire city as a "school," locating classes in whatever space was appropriate and available.

- Storefront schools. These tend to be very small units, usually located in urban ghettoes where vacant storefronts are numerous and cheap.

- Schools on wheels and floating schools. The Omnibus School of Survival based in Sausalito, Calif., and "housed" in an 83-foot schooner, is currently headed for the Caribbean. Students from the Alternative Schools Project in suburban Philadelphia last year rented a Winnebago camper and spent three months on the road.

- Vacant industrial and commercial space. The Community Learning Center in Washington, D.C. is housed in an old supermarket, while Our School (Robbinston, Me.) occupies an abandoned sardine factory.

One finding is emerging as something of a surprise to alternative school people: place is important to the young. Contemporary young people are flexible and can make do with simple surroundings, but the nature of those surroundings do very much influence their moods and responses. And life in alternative schools supports another generalization that should be of interest to school administrators everywhere: the school environment should be one that students can have impact on; there should be surfaces and places they can make their own. Every school probably needs some kind of optimal mix of "hard" and "soft" space. Most conventional schools are rather completely hard--hard walls, hard floors, hard playing surfaces. More softness in the environment is called for, in our judgment.

What kind of staff do we need for our alternative school? Most alternative schools seem to attract young radical educators, eager to explore with teenagers the new dimensions of freedom. But most schools that have survived more than a few years have found that faculties composed entirely of these young radicals are too unstable; that a few more mature teachers from the "straight" world are necessary if the school is to make it past the first few heady years.

In addition to rediscovering the virtues of diversity, alternative schools have made a major contribution to education by expanding the notion of "teacher." To supplement and complement their professional staffs, schools are using part-time teachers (usually paid on an hourly basis), volunteers from the community (such as artists, craftsmen, professionals), parents with special competences, undergraduate and graduate students from nearby colleges (both education majors and those in other fields), and their own students.

A large staff of part-time people and volunteers can be organizationally messy and can create problems between the "ins" and the "outs," but in general these folks from outside the teaching profession are proving to be a valuable resource. Furthermore, while some states may be a bit sticky about the use of non-certificated personnel and although some teacher associations and unions are somewhat justifiably worried about job-security problems, the possibility of using non-certified--and probably non-certifiable--men and women for very special teaching assignments is certainly worth exploring by schools of all kinds. It is one simple way to reduce class size without measurably increasing per pupil costs. Perhaps more importantly, it brings young students into close contact with adults who can offer them role models significantly different from those usually found in school faculties.

There is also a general trend in alternative education to move toward what can be called the "undifferentiated staff." In essence, this means that you don't find very many specialists--e.g., reading teachers--in alternative schools. And not many guidance counselors, either. Most of the schools report that their regular teachers can handle adequately 90 percent of the typical guidance questions and problems youngsters have, and that they hire professional therapists on a referral basis to care for the remainder.

This "undifferentiated staffing" trend also shows itself in the unusually small number of administrative personnel with which most alternative schools operate. Since student bodies are comparatively small, it's to be expected that the administrative corps of an alternative school would be correspondingly small, but in a majority of these schools the number and variety of administrators is noticeably smaller than the expected.

This trend suggests that when a new school is being developed, whether conventional or alternative, serious study should be made of the number and kind of specialists that can contribute effectively to the life of the school, especially since most large secondary schools customarily employ numbers of specialists of all kinds and it is not always clear that they are delivering the kind and quality of service which is really needed.

What type of leadership do we need? Do very small alternative schools need principals? That's a question that's sure to start a fight among alternative school ideologues. On one side are many radical educators who are insisting that experimental schools need to develop new types of democratic--or anarchic--decision-making processes, in which concensus is valued and status is abhorred.

There are others, like Jonathan Kozol, who argue from bitter personal experience that every institution needs a leader, and that he or she should be honest enough to identify himself as such and act like a leader.

Polemics aside, what seems to be emerging from the heated dispute is agreement that at least in its first year or two an alternative school is likely to function best institutionally if it has a strong leader who can make decisions, and who can and does make sure that important jobs are getting done. This will not be news to experienced principals. But what perhaps is new is the concomitant observation that even this very strong leader needs to get staff and students heavily involved in decision-making.

A few paragraphs earlier, we noted that most alternative schools operate with what by most standards would be considered sub-minimal administrative staffs. Many of them, additionally, are finding that small groups of teachers (not departmental groups), each with its own chosen leader who reports directly to the principal, provide an organizational pattern that makes good sense in people-oriented schools that are trying to remain flexible in times of rapid change. Minimal administrative structure of this kind has been known to work effectively in a few conventional schools, and it's our judgment that many others should at least consider the idea.

What rules and procedures for governance are needed? Some free schools start out rather naively assuming that no rules are needed, that beautiful youth are naturally good and, naturally, will work together in a climate of love and harmony. They soon discover otherwise! Young people, like the rest of us, need limits in order to grow; freedom is most meaningful for everyone within a context of limits. So, the most successful alternative schools spend a great deal of time involving students in boundary-making and rule-setting.

They find that time so spent pays off, for when students have a hand in establishing limits and making rules, they are more likely to support and enforce them. Peer pressure, as we know, is a powerful force toward conformity; using it to help young people conform to common-sense rules that they have developed provides the base for the healthiest kind of discipline.

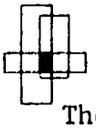
Both for rule-setting and general decision-making, most alternative schools employ some form of town meeting. While weekly town meetings often turn out to be inefficient and tiresome even in the eyes of their most ardent supporters, they can be effective means for involving students in school governance, particularly when the all-school gatherings are complemented by small problem-solving task forces that bring recommendations on policies and rules to the town meeting for consideration.

What type of student evaluation should we use? Their freedom to experiment has led a majority of alternative schools to develop some type of non-competitive reporting system, most often including written comments of some sort together with individual teacher-student conferences. The elimination of reporting practices such as the giving of letter grades and the computing of rank-in-class in most cases has had a salutary effect on the learning climate.

But, it must be admitted, there are a few problems, too.

Commenting/conferring takes extra time. It's easier and quicker to fill a report card with A's and B's than it is to write out a detailed, documented analysis of a student's problems and successes.

Some colleges and universities are pretty insistent about marks and rank. As a consequence, a number of alternative schools are giving their students choices about the reporting system they wish to have used in their individual cases. Furthermore, they urge their college-goers to check with the colleges they hope to attend so that they can select a grading/reporting system that is compatible with collegiate requirements or preferences. Other types of schools might consider the possibility of offering their students such an option.



And What Else?

There is one other important lesson that alternative schools are learning: they have about the same number of problems as do larger and conventional schools. Some of the men and women who have had a hand in the conceiving and designing of alternative schools thought they could build educational Utopias. They found out, however, that whenever fallible human beings are brought together into some common enterprise about which they care deeply, problems are sure to result. But there are some differences in the character of these problems. In alternative schools more often than in others, (1) the problems seem to be real and to affect real people; (2) they seem more solvable because the school is smaller and the problems more localized; and (3) people seem more concerned about getting solutions by cooperative effort rather than through remote administrative intervention.

Can There Be Real Alternatives Within the System?

Students, parents, and teachers in the public schools of such cities as Berkeley, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Seattle, and St. Paul can choose from a variety of school options, that is, from among a number of school alternatives. In Ann Arbor, Baltimore, Chicago, Hartford, New Orleans, Madison, Racine (Wis.) and Watertown (Mass.) schools-without-walls are breaking down the barriers that traditionally have separated school from community.

In Louisville, St. Paul, and elsewhere, alternative schools have been established as voluntary racial integration models for their communities.

Thousands of students from all social, racial, economic, and ethnic backgrounds are attending alternative schools this year, and many of these schools have long waiting lists and have had to determine admission by the chance-of-the-draw. There no longer can be any question of whether alternative schools can coexist alongside conventional schools within the domain of public education. They can and do.

The few examples that follow, which have been selected from over a hundred communities where alternatives are in operation, illustrate the strength and range of the movement to develop options in public education. In each case, the name given is the person to whom requests for further information should be sent. And material in quotation marks has been taken directly from program descriptions provided by the school or the school district.

eg SEATTLE: The Alternative Education Task Force, Seattle Public Schools, 815 4th Ave. N., Seattle, Wash. 98109. Mike Hickey, director.

Seattle offers 13 alternative schools and 23 reentry programs to the young people of the city. There are two general kinds of alternatives: (1) dropout and dropout prevention programs, and (2) "open, innovative, or free schools." These are one of Seattle's ways of recognizing its responsibility to educate all students.

Because of these programs, 3,000 students were in school in 1971-72 who were not in school the year before. Interest in the alternative programs on the part of staff and students in the regular program "has increased drastically." Funding for the alternatives comes from several sources, but primarily from the basic per pupil budget of the school district.

eg PHILADELPHIA AREA: Alternative Schools Project, Greenwood Ave., Wyncote, Pa. 19095. Ms. Gisha Berkowitz, director.

This alternative high school is a cooperative effort on the part of five suburban school districts and the schools of Philadelphia. The program is supported in part by federal funds (Title III ESEA) with the remainder coming from the six cooperating school districts.

Most of the students are selected by blind lottery, and the student body is representative of "the diversity of Greater Philadelphia--black and white, rich and poor, academically able and less able." The schools stress basic skills while also providing "opportunities for independent study and research, involvement in the local community, and the study of academic content in depth." Students receive their diplomas from a conventional high school in their own school district.

ST. PAUL: The St. Paul Open School, 1885 University Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55104. Wayne Jennings, director.

The St. Paul Open School got its start when a group of parents went to the school board to request an open-school alternative that would be available to all families in the city. The school opened in 1971 with 500 students, ages 5 through 18. Before the first year was ended, there was a waiting list of 750. The students are representative of all geographic areas of the city and of all socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds.

The school is organized around major learning and resource areas: art, music and drama, humanities, math and science, industrial arts, home economics, and physical education. The school operates without report cards, grades, required classes, and teacher lectures. It is supported entirely by the school district and on the same basis as other St. Paul public schools are, but, it is conjectured, the long run result may be "real financial savings."

MINNEAPOLIS: Southeast Alternatives, 3036 University Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, Minn. 55414. James Kent, director.

All of the families in southeast Minneapolis have a choice among four elementary options to the regular public schools serving the area. The four are: the contemporary school, the continuous progress school, the open school, and the free school. Of these, the free school includes secondary school as well as elementary grades, while the other alternatives feed students into Marshall University High School, an innovative school with many alternatives of its own, including off-campus learning experiences, independent study, and a wilderness learning program.

This group of alternative schools is committed to "providing a variety of meaningful educational alternatives for parents, students, and staff" through learning experiences suited to a wide range of teaching and learning styles. "Parent and community involvement, increased decision-making on the part of students, parents, and staff, a decentralized administrative structure, and careful documentation and evaluation" are major aspects of the plan, which is partially funded by the Experimental Schools Program of the National Institute of Education.

DENVER: Metropolitan Youth Education Center, 1420 Kalamath St., Denver, Col. 80202. Byron E. Graber, principal.

This center, which is designed to help young people who are actual or potential dropouts, is the joint effort of the public school systems of Denver and Jefferson County, Colorado's two largest school systems. It started with 32 students at a Jefferson County location in 1964. Today it operates in four locations and provides educational and job-training opportunities for more than 2,000 young people.

The Center's driving purpose is "to fit the needs of pupils whose own uniqueness other more conventional schools have overlooked." The school runs on a 12-month basis, but students may interrupt their studies at will and reenter at their own convenience because of the individualized, self-pacing nature of the instruction. The Center has helped thousands of students who, almost certainly, would not otherwise have finished their high school education.

BERKELEY: Experimental Schools Program, 1720 Oregon St., Berkeley, Cal. 94700. Larry Wells, director.

Beginning with Community High in 1969, Berkeley has developed 21 alternative schools thus far, and three more are to be added soon. Families can choose from among a diverse array of options in goals, ideas, methods, and attitudes, selecting from such possibilities as Black House with its emphasis on black studies, Casa de la Raza with its bilingual curriculum, the John Muir Child Development Center which focuses on nature, and Malcolm X with its environmental studies program.

Other options include multi-cultural and multi-ethnic approaches, basic skills and career exploration, work-study centers, and parentally controlled schools. The Berkeley Alternative Schools Program is one of that school system's efforts to respond to the diverse needs of the young people in that city. The Program is supported in part by a grant from the Experimental Schools Program of the National Institute of Education.

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About the ... NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR OPTIONS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.

The Consortium is an ad hoc group of people and institutions seeking to encourage the development of options, especially in public education.

The Consortium publishes a newsletter, Changing Schools, and other occasional papers as well as a directory of alternative schools. In general, it acts as a clearinghouse for information on alternative schools. The Consortium also provides consultant services, intervisitation arrangements, personnel exchanges, and other kinds of services for its members. During the current school year the Consortium and NASSP have been jointly sponsoring a number of regional conferences on options in public education.

For detailed information about the Consortium and its activities, write to Vernon H. Smith, co-director, Educational Alternatives Project, School of Education 328, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

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